

property that she used for non-residential purposes. B determines that \$4,000 of the gain is allocable to the non-residential portion of the property and that \$17,000 of the gain is allocable to the portion of the property that she used as her principal residence.

(iii) B must recognize the \$4,000 of gain allocable to the non-residential portion of the property (all of which is unrecaptured section 1250 gain within the meaning of section 1(h)). In addition, the section 121 exclusion does not apply to the gain allocable to the residential portion of the property to the extent of the depreciation adjustments attributable to the residential portion of the property for periods after May 6, 1997 (\$3,000). Therefore, B may exclude \$14,000 of the gain from the sale of the property.

Example 3. Non-residential use of a separate dwelling unit. (i) In 2002 Taxpayer C buys a 3-story townhouse and converts the basement level, which has a separate entrance, into a separate apartment by installing a kitchen and bathroom and removing the interior stairway that leads from the basement to the upper floors. After the conversion, the property constitutes 2 dwelling units within the meaning of paragraph (e)(2) of this section. C uses the first and second floors of the townhouse as his principal residence and rents the basement level to tenants from 2003 to 2007. C claims depreciation deductions of \$2,000 for that period with respect to the basement apartment. C sells the entire property in 2007, realizing gain of \$18,000. C has no other section 1231 or capital gains or losses for 2007.

(ii) Because the basement apartment and the upper floors of the townhouse are separate dwelling units, C must allocate the gain between the portion of the property that he used as his principal residence and the portion of the property that he used for non-residential purposes under paragraph (e) of this section. After allocating the basis and the amount realized between the residential and non-residential portions of the property, C determines that \$6,000 of the gain is allocable to the non-residential portion of the property and that \$12,000 of the gain is allocable to the portion of the property used as his residence. C must recognize the \$6,000 of gain allocable to the non-residential portion of the property (\$2,000 of which is unrecaptured section 1250 gain within the meaning of section 1(h), and \$4,000 of which is adjusted net capital gain). C may exclude \$12,000 of the gain from the sale of the property.

Example 4. Separate dwelling unit converted to residential use. The facts are the same as in *Example 3* except that in 2007 C incorporates the basement of the townhouse into his principal residence by eliminating the kitchen and building a new interior stairway to the upper floors. C uses all 3 floors of the townhouse as his principal residence for 2 full years and sells the townhouse in 2010, real-

izing a gain of \$20,000. Under section 121(d)(6) and paragraph (d) of this section, C must recognize \$2,000 of the gain as unrecaptured section 1250 gain within the meaning of section 1(h). Because C used the entire 3 floors of the townhouse as his principal residence for 2 of the 5 years preceding the sale of the property, C may exclude the remaining \$18,000 of the gain from the sale of the house.

Example 5. Non-residential use within the dwelling unit, property depreciated. Taxpayer D, an attorney, buys a house in 2003. The house constitutes a single dwelling unit but D uses a portion of the house as a law office. D claims depreciation deductions of \$2,000 during the period that she owns the house. D sells the house in 2006, realizing a gain of \$13,000. D has no other section 1231 or capital gains or losses for 2006. Under section 121(d)(6) and paragraph (d) of this section, D must recognize \$2,000 of the gain as unrecaptured section 1250 gain within the meaning of section 1(h). D may exclude the remaining \$11,000 of the gain from the sale of her house because, under paragraph (e)(1) of this section, she is not required to allocate gain to the business use within the dwelling unit.

Example 6. Non-residential use within the dwelling unit, property not depreciated. The facts are the same as in *Example 5*, except that D is not entitled to claim any depreciation deductions with respect to her business use of the house. D may exclude \$13,000 of the gain from the sale of her house because, under paragraph (e)(1) of this section, she is not required to allocate gain to the business use within the dwelling unit.

(f) *Effective date.* This section is applicable for sales and exchanges on or after December 24, 2002. For rules on electing to apply the provisions of this section retroactively, see § 1.121-4(j).

[T.D. 9030, 67 FR 78361, Dec. 24, 2002]

§ 1.121-2 Limitations.

(a) *Dollar limitations*—(1) *In general.* A taxpayer may exclude from gross income up to \$250,000 of gain from the sale or exchange of the taxpayer's principal residence. A taxpayer is eligible for only one maximum exclusion per principal residence.

(2) *Joint owners.* If taxpayers jointly own a principal residence but file separate returns, each taxpayer may exclude from gross income up to \$250,000 of gain that is attributable to each taxpayer's interest in the property, if the requirements of section 121 have otherwise been met.

(3) *Special rules for joint returns*—(i) *In general.* A husband and wife who make a joint return for the year of the sale or exchange of a principal residence may exclude up to \$500,000 of gain if—

(A) Either spouse meets the 2-year ownership requirements of § 1.121-1(a) and (c);

(B) Both spouses meet the 2-year use requirements of § 1.121-1(a) and (c); and

(C) Neither spouse excluded gain from a prior sale or exchange of property under section 121 within the last 2 years (as determined under paragraph (b) of this section).

(ii) *Other joint returns.* For taxpayers filing jointly, if either spouse fails to meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section, the maximum limitation amount to be claimed by the couple is the sum of each spouse's limitation amount determined on a separate basis as if they had not been married. For this purpose, each spouse is treated as owning the property during the period that either spouse owned the property.

(4) *Examples.* The provisions of this paragraph (a) are illustrated by the following examples. The examples assume that § 1.121-3 (relating to the reduced maximum exclusion) does not apply to the sale of the property. The examples are as follows:

Example 1. Unmarried Taxpayers A and B own a house as joint owners, each owning a 50 percent interest in the house. They sell the house after owning and using it as their principal residence for 2 full years. The gain realized from the sale is \$256,000. A and B are each eligible to exclude \$128,000 of gain because the amount of realized gain allocable to each of them from the sale does not exceed each taxpayer's available limitation amount of \$250,000.

Example 2. The facts are the same as in *Example 1*, except that A and B are married taxpayers who file a joint return for the taxable year of the sale. A and B are eligible to exclude the entire amount of realized gain (\$256,000) from gross income because the gain realized from the sale does not exceed the limitation amount of \$500,000 available to A and B as taxpayers filing a joint return.

Example 3. During 1999, married Taxpayers H and W each sell a residence that each had separately owned and used as a principal residence before their marriage. Each spouse meets the ownership and use tests for his or her respective residence. Neither spouse meets the use requirement for the other spouse's residence. H and W file a joint re-

turn for the year of the sales. The gain realized from the sale of H's residence is \$200,000. The gain realized from the sale of W's residence is \$300,000. Because the ownership and use requirements are met for each residence by each respective spouse, H and W are each eligible to exclude up to \$250,000 of gain from the sale of their individual residences. However, W may not use H's unused exclusion to exclude gain in excess of her limitation amount. Therefore, H and W must recognize \$50,000 of the gain realized on the sale of W's residence.

Example 4. Married Taxpayers H and W sell their residence and file a joint return for the year of the sale. W, but not H, satisfies the requirements of section 121. They are eligible to exclude up to \$250,000 of the gain from the sale of the residence because that is the sum of each spouse's dollar limitation amount determined on a separate basis as if they had not been married (\$0 for H, \$250,000 for W).

Example 5. Married Taxpayers H and W have owned and used their principal residence since 1998. On February 16, 2001, H dies. On September 24, 2001, W sells the residence and realizes a gain of \$350,000. Pursuant to section 6013(a)(3), W and H's executor make a joint return for 2001. All \$350,000 of the gain from the sale of the residence may be excluded.

Example 6. Assume the same facts as *Example 5*, except that W does not sell the residence until January 31, 2002. Because W's filing status for the taxable year of the sale is single, the special rules for joint returns under paragraph (a)(3) of this section do not apply and W may exclude only \$250,000 of the gain.

(b) *Application of section 121 to only 1 sale or exchange every 2 years*—(1) *In general.* Except as otherwise provided in § 1.121-3 (relating to the reduced maximum exclusion), a taxpayer may not exclude from gross income gain from the sale or exchange of a principal residence if, during the 2-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange, the taxpayer sold or exchanged other property for which gain was excluded under section 121. For purposes of this paragraph (b)(1), any sale or exchange before May 7, 1997, is disregarded.

(2) *Example.* The following example illustrates the rules of this paragraph (b). The example assumes that § 1.121-3 (relating to the reduced maximum exclusion) does not apply to the sale of the property. The example is as follows:

Example. Taxpayer A owns a townhouse that he uses as his principal residence for 2

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full years, 1998 and 1999. A buys a house in 2000 that he owns and uses as his principal residence. A sells the townhouse in 2002 and excludes gain realized on its sale under section 121. A sells the house in 2003. Although A meets the 2-year ownership and use requirements of section 121, A is not eligible to exclude gain from the sale of the house because A excluded gain within the last 2 years under section 121 from the sale of the townhouse.

(c) *Effective date.* This section is applicable for sales and exchanges on or after December 24, 2002. For rules on electing to apply the provisions of this section retroactively, see § 1.121-4(j).

[T.D. 9030, 67 FR 78361, Dec. 24, 2002]

§ 1.121-3 Reduced maximum exclusion for taxpayers failing to meet certain requirements.

(a) *In general.* In lieu of the limitation under section 121(b) and § 1.121-2, a reduced maximum exclusion limitation may be available for a taxpayer who sells or exchanges property used as the taxpayer's principal residence but fails to satisfy the ownership and use requirements described in § 1.121-1(a) and (c) or the 2-year limitation described in § 1.121-2(b).

(b) through (f) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.121-3T(b) through (f).

(g) *Computation of reduced maximum exclusion.* (1) The reduced maximum exclusion is computed by multiplying the maximum dollar limitation of \$250,000 (\$500,000 for certain joint filers) by a fraction. The numerator of the fraction is the shortest of the period of time that the taxpayer owned the property during the 5-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange; the period of time that the taxpayer used the property as the taxpayer's principal residence during the 5-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange; or the period of time between the date of a prior sale or exchange of property for which the taxpayer excluded gain under section 121 and the date of the current sale or exchange. The numerator of the fraction may be expressed in days or months. The denominator of the fraction is 730 days or 24 months (depending on the measure of time used in the numerator).

(2) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the rules of this paragraph (g):

Example 1. Taxpayer A purchases a house that she uses as her principal residence. Twelve months after the purchase, A sells the house due to a change in place of her employment. A has not excluded gain under section 121 on a prior sale or exchange of property within the last 2 years. A is eligible to exclude up to \$125,000 of the gain from the sale of her house ($12/24 \times \$250,000$).

Example 2. (i) Taxpayer H owns a house that he has used as his principal residence since 1996. On January 15, 1999, H and W marry and W begins to use H's house as her principal residence. On January 15, 2000, H sells the house due to a change in W's place of employment. Neither H nor W has excluded gain under section 121 on a prior sale or exchange of property within the last 2 years.

(ii) Because H and W have not each used the house as their principal residence for at least 2 years during the 5-year period preceding its sale, the maximum dollar limitation amount that may be claimed by H and W will not be \$500,000, but the sum of each spouse's limitation amount determined on a separate basis as if they had not been married. (See § 1.121-2(a)(3)(ii).)

(iii) H is eligible to exclude up to \$250,000 of gain because he meets the requirements of section 121. W is not eligible to exclude the maximum dollar limitation amount. Instead, because the sale of the house is due to a change in place of employment, W is eligible to claim a reduced maximum exclusion of up to \$125,000 of the gain ($365/730 \times \$250,000$). Therefore, H and W are eligible to exclude up to \$375,000 of gain ($\$250,000 + \$125,000$) from the sale of the house.

(h) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.121-3T(h).

(i) through (k) [Reserved].

(l) *Effective date.* This section is applicable for sales and exchanges on or after December 24, 2002. For rules on electing to apply the provisions of this section retroactively, see § 1.121-4(j).

[T.D. 9030, 67 FR 78361, Dec. 24, 2002]

§ 1.121-3T Reduced maximum exclusion for taxpayers failing to meet certain requirements (temporary).

(a) [Reserved] For further guidance, see § 1.121-3(a).

(b) *Primary reason for sale or exchange.* In order for a taxpayer to claim a reduced maximum exclusion under section 121(c), the sale or exchange must